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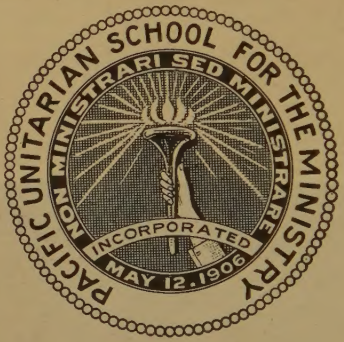

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THE GIFT OF

EDWARD HALE GREENLEAF

GLIMPSES OF HEAVEN

OR

LIGHT BEYOND JORDAN

Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.
But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit:
1 Cor. II. 9-10.

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GLIMPSES OF HEAVEN;

OR,

Light beyond Jordan.

Dear, beauteous Death! thou jewel of the just
Shining nowhere but in the dark!
What mysteries do lie beyond thy dust,
Could man outlook that mark!

He that hath found some fledged bird's nest may know,
At first sight, if the bird be flown;
But what fair field or grove he sings in now,
That is to him unknown.

And yet as angels in some brighter dreams
Call to the soul when man doth sleep,
So some strange thoughts transcend our wonted themes
And into glory peep. *Vaughan.*

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GLIMPSES OF HEAVEN.

CHAPTER I.

On Jordan's stormy banks I stand,
And cast a wishful eye,
To Canaan's fair and happy land,
Where my possessions lie.

"HEAVEN!" And who ventures to offer to the public a book with such a title? What mortal presumes to describe its joys, or paint its glories? Surely none can have gone down to the grave and thence up to the mansions of the blessed, and so have become qualified to disclose to us these mysteries.

No. It is the Son of God, who came down from Heaven, that has tasted the gloom of the one and ascended to the brightness of the other. Jesus Christ has died, yea rather has risen again, and "even now sitteth at the right hand of the Most High." It is his revelation on this heart-thrilling subject that this little volume would set forth; condensing the abundant testimony of the Holy Scriptures, and connecting with it that of sainted spirits, who, when near their departure from this vale of tears, seemed to have had a foretaste of heaven.

Our ideas of heaven are not always scriptural. They are based often on our wishes and our hopes of bliss beyond the grave. We are too apt to think of heaven as a locality, a tangible abode; and each mind, according to its natural constitution,—every person, according to

his taste, or his notions of happiness,—represents it to his fancy. In the language of another, "Do you find man a savage? Better hunting-grounds and serener climates make his heaven.—Do you find him a Goth, delighting only in war? The brave shall be regaled with feasting in the halls of Valhalla and drinking wine from the skulls of the vanquished.—Is he a Mohammedan, passing his listless hours by fountains and in gardens? Lo, his eternity shall be dreamed away on silken couches, and he trusts to find lilies and roses in heaven.—Is there a nation intellectual and brave, whose proudest laurel is bestowed upon the victorious warrior, and whose freshest civic wreath encircles the brow of the artist, the historian, and the poet? In their elysium, the blessed gaze with delight on trophies and warlike

implements, or rehearse with rapture the songs of immortal bards and the compositions of the eloquent."

Even those who profess and call themselves Christians, know much less of heaven than they ought—much less than they might, with careful study. Should a departed friend return to earth to tell us of unseen realities, how eagerly should we seek his society and hang upon his lips, and with what perfect confidence should we receive his communications! Have we a friend more worthy of our love and confidence than Jesus? And has he not revealed to us the state of the blessed after death?

At one time the happiness of the saints is represented as consisting in the presence of God—as "seeing Him as he is;" at another, it is described as his dwelling in the new Jerusalem—a city so far transcend-

ing in splendour any conceivable earthly scene, that, under that figure, we cannot fail to see portrayed the infinite, ineffable glories of the redeemed. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

Baxter says that "one ingredient in the bliss of heaven is the highest degree of the saints' personal perfection both of body and soul. For the eye of flesh is not capable of seeing, nor the ear of hearing, nor the heart of understanding its glories; but there the eye, ear, and heart are made capable: else how could they enjoy them? The more perfect the sight, the more delightful the beautiful object; the more perfect the appetite,

the sweeter the food; the more musical the ear, the more pleasant the melody; the more perfect the soul, the more joyous those joys, and the more glorious those glories."

We are prone to think that there is more poetry than Scripture in our views of heaven, and that we derive our ideas of it as much from the works of poets as from the word of God. Milton gives such a description of its glories, that an unbeliever, or careless reader of the Bible, might think it fabled.

No sooner had the Almighty ceased, but all
The multitude of angels, with a shout,
Loud as from numbers without number, sweet
As from blest voices, uttering joy, heaven rung
With jubilee, and loud hosannas filled
The eternal regions. Lowly reverent
Toward either throne they bow, and to the ground,
With solemn adoration, down they cast

Their crowns, inwove with amaranth and gold;
Immortal amaranth, a flower which once
In Paradise, fast by the tree of life—
Began to bloom, but soon, for man's offence,
To heaven removed, where first it grew, there grows
And flowers aloft, shading the fount of life;
And where the river of bliss through midst of heaven
Rolls o'er Elysian flowers her amber stream;
With these that never fade, the spirits elect
Bind their resplendent locks, inwreathed with beams:
Now in loose garlands thick thrown off, the bright
Pavement, that like a sea of jasper shone,
Impurpled with celestial roses, smiled.
Then, crown'd again, their golden harps they took,
Harps, ever tuned, that, glittering by their side,
Like quivers hung, and with preamble sweet
Of charming symphony, they introduce
Their sacred song, and waken raptures high;
No voice exempt, no voice but well could join
Melodious part,—such concord is in heaven.

By careful observation and comparison, it will be readily seen that all this account is founded upon scriptural repre-

sentations, the greater part of which may be read in the Revelation of St. John the Divine.

Baxter thus alludes to our capacity to appreciate heaven:—"The knowledge of God and his Christ, a delightful complacency in that mutual love, an everlasting rejoicing in the enjoyment of our God, with a perpetual singing of his high praises—this is a heaven for a saint. Then we shall live in our own element. We are now as the fish in a vessel of water—only so much as will keep them alive; but what is that to the ocean? We have a little air let in to afford us breathing; but what is that to the sweet and fresh gales upon Mount Zion? We have a beam of the sun to lighten our darkness and a warm ray to keep us from freezing; but there we shall live in its light and be revived by its heat."

"Thus," says Isaac Taylor, "when the infant wakes into the light of this world, every organ presently assumes its destined function: the heaving bosom confesses the fitness of the material it inhales to support the new style of existence; and the senses admit the first impressions of the external world with a sort of anticipated familiarity; and though utterly untaught in the scenes upon which it has suddenly entered, and inexperienced in the orders of the place where it must, ere long, act its part, yet it is truly meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of life. And thus, too, a real meetness for his birth into the future life may belong to the Christian, though he be utterly ignorant of its circumstances and conditions. But the functions of that new life have been long in a hidden play of preparation for full activity. He

has waited in the coil of mortality only for the moment when he should inspire the ether of the upper world, and behold the light of eternal day, and hear the voice of new companions, and taste of the immortal fruit, and drink of the river of life; and then after, perhaps, a short season of nursing in the arms of the elder members of the family above, he will take his place in the service and orders of the heavenly house, nor ever have room to regret the ignorance of his mortal state. There is a preparation for that higher world, and an adaptation to it immediately after death."

Tell me, ye winged winds,
That round my pathway roar,
Do ye not know some spot
Where mortals weep no more?
Some lone and pleasant dell,
Some valley east or west,

Where, free from toil and pain,
The weary soul may rest?
The loud wind soften'd to a whisper low,
And sighed for pity as it answer'd—"No!"

Tell me, thou mighty deep,
Whose billows round me play,
Know'st thou some favour'd spot,
Some island far away,
Where weary man may find
The bliss for which he sighs—
Where sorrow never lives,
And friendship never dies?
The loud waves rolling in perpetual flow,
Stopped for a while, and murmuring, answer'd—
"No!"

And thou, serenest moon,
Who, with such holy face,
Dost look upon the earth
Asleep in night's embrace,
Know'st thou no better land,
Hast thou not seen some spot,

Where miserable man
Might find a happier lot?
Behind a cloud the moon withdrew in wo,
And a sweet voice, but sad, responded—"No!"

Tell me, my secret soul,
Oh! tell me, Hope and Faith,
And thou, O Love, reveal
What inmost nature saith:
Is there no happier spot,
Where mortals may be blest,
Where grief may find a balm,
And weariness a rest?
Faith, Hope, and Love—best boons to mortals given—
Waved their bright wings, and whisper'd—"Yes, in Heaven!"

CHAPTER II.

I hear of regions where the holy dwell,
  Where the pure spirits of the saints will be,
Where bliss beyond what human tongue can tell,
  Lives through the ages of Eternity.
There, where a stream, with silver tide, makes glad
  That city of the Lord, whose gates are praise,
No eye is weary, and no heart is sad,
  But harps are tuned to seraph's rapturous lays.

In the contemplation of the bliss of heaven, we find an agreement among the good of all ages—those who, in suffering, martyrdom, and death, have evinced their confidence in the recompense of reward, and have gone up to take their crown, as well as those who, in the more peaceful enjoyment of Christianity, and amid the active duties of a religious life,

have been called to realize the fulfilment of all their hopes of that blessed world.

A clergyman* of the Church of England, thus vividly expresses his ideas of some of the sources of enjoyment in the upper world. Descanting upon that one feature of it, "And there shall be no night there,"† he says, "I glory in the predicted absence of night. We are accustomed to take night as the image of ignorance, perplexity and sorrow. And to affirm the absence of night from the heavenly state, may justly be regarded as affirming the absence of all which darkness is used to represent. 'There shall be no night there.' The ways of Providence shall be made clear. The mysteries of grace shall be unfolded. The things hard to be understood shall be ex-

* Melville. † Rev. xxii. 5.

plained. We shall discover order in what has seemed intricate, wisdom in what we have thought unaccountable, and good where we have seen only injury. 'There shall be no night there!' Children of affliction, hear ye this! Pain cannot exist in the atmosphere of heaven; no tears are shed there, no graves opened, no friends removed: and never for a lonely moment does even a flitting cloud shadow the deep rapture of tranquillity. 'There shall be no night there!' Children of calamity, hear ye this: no baffled plans there, no frustrated hopes, no sudden disappointments, but one rich tide of happiness shall roll through eternity, and deepen as it rolls. 'There shall be no night there!' Ye who are struggling with a corrupt nature, hear ye this: the night is the season of crime: it throws its mantle over a thousand enormities which

shun the face of day. And to say that 'there shall be no night,' is to proclaim the reign of universal purity: no temptation there, no sinful desires to resist, no evil heart to battle with; but holiness shall have become the very nature of the glorified inhabitants, and the very element in which they move.

"Oh! this mortal must have put on immortality, and this corruptible incorruption, ere we can know all the meaning and richness of the description which makes heaven a place without night. But even now we can ascertain enough to assure us that the description keeps pace with all that our imagination can sketch of the nobility and felicity of the inheritance of the saints.

"I behold man made equal with the angels—no longer the dwarfish thing which at the best he is while confined

to this narrow stage, but grown into mighty stature, so that he moves amid the highest with capacities as vast and energies as unabating. I behold the page of universal truth spread before him, no obscurity in a single line, and the brightness not dazzling the vision. I behold the removal of all mistake, of all misconception: conjectures have given place to certainties, controversies are ended, difficulties are solved, prophecies are completed, parables are interpreted. I behold the hushing up of every grief, the wiping away of every tear, the prevention of every sorrow, the communication of every joy. I behold the final banishment of whatsoever has alliance with sinfulness, the splendid re-impressment of every feature of the divine image upon man, the unlimited diffusion of righteousness, the triumphant ad-

mission of the fallen into God's presence, and their unassailable security against fresh apostasy. I behold this in the picture of a world without night, and I feel as though I did not need the wall of sapphire and the gate of pearl with which the evangelist has decked the new Jerusalem. I long for that city, and I know it must be ineffably beautiful, inconceivably desirable, when I have heard him simply assert, 'There shall be no night there.'"

From the devout Thomas à Kempis, long since gone to his reward, we have the following:—"The day is coming, fixed by unalterable decree, when, instead of the vicissitudes of day and night, and joy and sorrow, there shall be uninterrupted light, infinite splendour, unchangeable peace, and everlasting rest Then thou wilt no longer say, 'Who

shall deliver me from the body of this death?' nor exclaim, 'Wo is me that my pilgrimage is prolonged!' for 'death shall be swallowed up in victory,' and the corruptible will have put on incorruption. Then all tears shall be wiped away from thy eyes, and all sorrow taken from thy heart, and thou shalt enjoy perpetual delight in the lovely society of angels and the spirits of the just made perfect."

Again he says—

"Oh, most blessed mansions of the heavenly Jerusalem! Oh, most effulgent day of eternity, which night obscureth not, but the supreme truth continually enlighteneth!—A day of perennial peace and joy, incapable of change or intermission! It shineth now in the full splendour of perpetual light to the blessed; but to the poor pilgrims on

earth it appeareth only at a great distance, and 'through a glass, darkly.'"

Another writer says, "When we speak to men of the deep and permanent repose of heaven—when we enlarge on the manifestations of the Deity—when we declare that Christ, as the 'minister of his sanctuary,' will unfold to his church the mysteries which have perplexed them—when we gather together what is gorgeous and precious and beautiful in the invisible creation, and crowd into it the imagery wherewith we delineate the final home of the saints—when we take the sun from the firmament, that the Lord may shine there; and remove all temples from the city, that the Lord may be its sanctuary, and hush all human minstrelsy, that the immense tide of song may roll from thousand times ten thousand voices—we speak

only the words of truth and soberness, though we have not compassed the greatness nor depicted the loveliness of the portion which awaits the disciples of Christ. Oh! as the shining company take the circuit of the celestial city, and go round about her, telling the towers thereof, marking well her bulwarks, and considering her palaces, who can doubt that they say one to another, 'As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of our God?' We heard that here the 'wicked cease from troubling,' and now we behold the deep, rich calm. We heard that here we should be with the Lord, and now we 'see him face to face.' We heard that here 'we should know even as we are known,' and now the ample page of universal truth is open to our inspection. We heard that here, with the crown on the head, and the

harp in the hand, we should execute the will, and hymn the praises of our God, and now we wear the diadem and wake the melody."

Little wonder is it, in view of such ravishing prospects, that one sings—

"Let me go! for I am weary
Of the chain which binds me here:
Let my spirit bend its pinions
To a brighter, holier sphere.
Earth, 'tis true, has friends to bless me
With their fond and faithful love,
But the hands of angels beckon
Me to brighter worlds above.

"Let me go! for earth has sorrows,
Sin, and pain, and bitter tears;
All its paths are dark and dreary,
All its hopes are fraught with fears.
Short-lived are its brightest flowers,
Soon its cherish'd hopes decay;
Let me go! I fain would leave it
For the realms of endless day.

'Let me go! my heart has tasted
Of my Saviour's wondrous grace;
Let me go where I shall ever
See and know him 'face to face.'
Let me go! the trees of heaven
Rise before me, waving bright,
And the distant crystal waters
Flash upon my failing sight.

"Let me go! for songs seraphic
Now seem calling from the sky:
'Tis the welcome of the angels,
Which e'en now are hov'ring nigh.
Let me go! they wait to bear me
To the mansions of the blest,
Where the spirit, wan and weary,
Finds at last its long-sought rest."

"I believe," says Bishop Beveridge, "there will be a glorious entrance opened for the righteous into the holy of holies, the seat and foundation of all bliss and happiness, where they shall draw nigh to

the Most High, behold his presence in righteousness, and reign for ever with him in glory—where they shall *see him face to face*, and know him, *the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent.* And this knowing and beholding God face to face is, I believe, the very heaven of heavens, even the highest happiness that it is possible a creature should be made capable of, for in having a perfect knowledge of God, we shall have a perfect knowledge of all things that were, or shall, yea, or can be in this world. For God being the Being of all beings, in seeing him, we shall not only see whatsoever hath been, but whatsoever can be communicated from him;—the contemplation of which cannot but ravish and transport my spirit beyond itself, especially when I consider that in knowing this one, all-things God, I cannot but en-

joy whatever it is possible any creature should enjoy. * * *

"And this, therefore, I believe to be the perfection of my happiness, and the happiness of my perfection in the other world, that I shall perfectly know and love, and so perfectly enjoy and rejoice in the Most High God, and shall be, as known, so perfectly loved, and rejoiced in by him.

"If we have but the least drop of these pleasures distilled into us here upon the earth, how strangely do they make us, as it were, beside ourselves, by lifting us above ourselves.

"And if the foretastes of the blessings of Canaan, if the dark intimations of God's love to us, be so unspeakably pleasant, ravishing, and delightsome, oh, what will the full possession of him be! What transporting ecstasies of love and

joy shall those blessed souls be possessed with, who shall behold the King of glory smiling upon them, rejoicing over them, and shining forth in all his love and glory upon them! Oh, what astonishing beauty will they then behold! What flowing, what refreshing pleasures shall then solace and delight their spirits unto all eternity!"

In another place, the same heavenly-minded man thus expresses himself:—"I desire the reader to attend me first into the celestial mansions, above yonder glorious sun and the stars themselves, where not only cherubim and seraphim, angels and archangels, but also many of our brethren, the sons of men, are at this very moment enjoying the presence and singing the praises of the Most High God. There are the spirits of just men made perfect, perfect in themselves and perfect

in all their actions; perfectly free from sin and misery; perfectly full of all true grace and glory,—all their faculties being reduced to that most perfect and excellent frame and constitution, that their understandings are continually taken up with the contemplation of the Supreme Truth, and their wills in the embracement of their chiefest good, so that all the inclinations of the soul rest in God as their proper centre, in whom, by consequence, they enjoy as much as they can desire, yea, as much as they can be made capable of desiring; for all those infinite proportions that are concentered in God himself, are now in their possession, to solace and delight themselves in the full and perfect enjoyment of them, by which means they are as happy as God himself can make them: insomuch that at this very moment, methinks, we may

all behold them so ravished, so transported with their celestial joys, that it may justly strike us into admiration, how even creatures, which were once sinful, could be made so pure, so perfect, and altogether so happy as they are.

"And could we but leave our bodies for a while below, and go up to take a turn in the new Jerusalem that is above, we could not but be ravished and transported at the very sight, both of the places and inhabitants,—every one being far more glorious than the greatest emperors of this world, with nothing else than crowns of glory on their heads, and sceptres of righteousness in their hands; where they think of nothing but the glory of God, discourse of nothing but praising him, do nothing but adore and worship him: in a word, whatsoever is

agreeable to our natures, whatsoever is desirable to our souls, whatsoever can any way conduce to make men happy, is fully, perfectly, eternally enjoyed by all and every person that is in heaven."

Robert Hall, speaking of the heavenly state, says, "To that state all the pious on earth are tending; and if there is a law from above from whose operations none are exempt, which irresistibly conveys their bodies to darkness and to dust, there is another, not less certain nor less powerful, which conducts their spirits to the abode of bliss, to the bosom of their Father and their God. The wheels of nature are not made to roll backward: every thing presses on toward eternity: from the birth of time an impetuous current has set in, which bears all the sons of men toward that interminable ocean. Meanwhile, heaven is attracting to itself

whatever is congenial to its nature, is enriching itself by the spoils of earth, and collecting within its capacious bosom whatever is pure, permanent, and divine, leaving nothing for the last fire to consume but the objects and slaves of concupiscence: while every thing which grace has prepared and beautified shall be gathered and selected from the ruins of the world to adorn that eternal city, 'which hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God doth enlighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.' Let us obey the voice that call us thither; let us 'seek the things that are above,' and no longer cleave to a world which must shortly perish, and which we must shortly quit, while we neglect to prepare for that in which we are invited to dwell for ever."

CHAPTER III.

On all those wide-extended plains
Shines one eternal day;
There God the Son for ever reigns,
And scatters night away.

To the inquiring and contemplative mind, the meditations of Bishop Hall on the residence of the saints hereafter will be most welcome. So earnest were his aspirations, so ardent his longings for that blessed world, that he seems almost to have pierced the vail, and to have enjoyed an actual vision of the celestial city.

"See the place wherein they are—the heaven of heavens, the paradise of God, infinitely delectable, such as no eye can behold and not be blessed. Shouldst thou set thy tabernacle in the midst of

the sun, thou couldst not but be encompassed with marvellous light; yet even there it would be but as midnight with thee, in comparison of those irradiations of glory which shine forth above in that imperial region, for thy God is the sun there.* By how much, therefore, those divine rays exceed the brightest beams of his creature, so much doth the beauty of that heaven of the blessed surpass the created light of this inferior and starry firmament. Even the very place contributes not a little to our joy or misery. It is hard to be merry in a jail; and the great Persian monarch thought it very improper for a courtier to be of a sad countenance within the verge of so great a royalty.† How canst thou then, O my soul, be but wholly taken

* Rev. xxi. 23. † Neh. ii. 2.

up with the sight of that celestial Jerusalem, the beauteous city of thy God, the blessed mansions of glorified spirits! Surely, if earth could have yielded any thing more fair and estimable than gold, pearls, precious stones, it should have been borrowed to resemble these supernal habitations; but, alas! the lustre of these base materials doth but darken the resplendence of these divine excellencies.

* * * "But what were the place, O my soul, how goodly and glorious soever in itself, if it were not for the presence of Him whose being there makes it heaven? Lo! there the throne of that Heavenly Majesty, which, filling and comprehending the large circumference of this whole both lower and superior world, yet there keeps and manifests his state with the infinite

magnificence of the King of eternal glory. There he, in an ineffable manner, communicates himself to blessed spirits, both angels and men, and that very vision is no less to them than beautiful. Surely were the place a thousand degrees lower in beauty and perfection than it is, yet that presence would render it celestial: the residence of the king was wont to turn the meanest village into a castle or court. The sweet singer of Israel saw this of old, and could say, 'In thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.' It is not so in these earthly and finite excellencies. A man may see mountains of treasure and be never a whit the richer, or may view the pomp and splendour of princes and be still a beggar; but the infinite graces of that Heavenly King are so communicative that no man can see

him, but must be transformed to the likeness of his glory."

Again: "And canst thou apprehend thyself now approaching to the glory of the heaven of heavens—a place and state of so infinite contentment and happiness—and not be ecstasied with joy? There, then, shalt thou, O my soul, enjoy a perfect rest from all thy toils, cares, and fears; there shalt thou find a true vital life, free from all the encumbrances of thy miserable pilgrimage —free from the dangers of either sins or temptations—free from all anxiety and distraction—free from all sorrow, pain, perturbation—free from all the possibility of change or death—a life wherein is nothing but peace and perfect pleasure —nothing but perpetual melody of saints and angels singing sweet hallelujahs to their God—a life which the most glorious

Deity both gives and is—a life wherein thou hast the full fruition of the ever-blessed Godhead, the continual society of the celestial spirits, the blissful presence of the glorified humanity of thy dear Saviour—a life wherein thou hast ever consort with the glorious company of the apostles, the goodly fellowship of the patriarchs and prophets, the noble army of martyrs and confessors; shortly, the blessed assembly of all the faithful professors of the name of the Lord Jesus, that, having finished their course, sit now shining in their promised glory. See, then, that yet unapproachable light, that divine magnificence of the Heavenly King—see that resplendent crown of righteousness which decks the heads of every one of those saints, and is ready to be set on thine, when thou hast happily overcome those spiritual powers

wherewith thou art still conflicting; see the joyful triumphs of those exulting victors; see the measures of their glory, different, yet all full, and the least unmeasurable; lastly, see all this happiness, not limited to thousands, nor yet millions of years, but commeasured by no less than eternity.

"And now, my soul, if thou have received the infallible engagement of thy God, in that, having believed, thou art *sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of thine inheritance, until the full redemption of thy purchased possession;** if, through his infinite mercy, thou be now upon the entering into that blessed place and state of immortality, forbear, if thou canst, to be raised above thyself with the *joy of the Holy Ghost;*†

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* Eph. i. 13, 14. † 1 Thess. i. 6.

to be enlarged toward thy God with a joy unspeakable and glorious. See, if thou canst now breathe forth any thing but praises to thy God, and songs of rejoicing, bearing evermore a part in that heavenly ditty of the angels, 'Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might be unto our God for ever and ever.'*

"And oh! blessed Jesus, what a heaven is this that thou hast laid out for me!—how resplendent, how transcendently glorious! Even that lower paradise which thou providest for the harbour of innocence and holiness was full of admirable beauty, pleasure, and magnificence; but if it be compared with this paradise above, which thou

* Rev. vii. 12.

hast prepared for the everlasting entertainment of restored souls, how mean and beggarly it was! Oh match too unequal, of the best piece of earth, with the highest state of the heaven of heavens!

"In this earthly paradise I find thine angels, the cherubim, but it was to keep man off from that garden of delight, and from the tree of life in the midst of it; but in this heavenly one I find millions of thy cherubim and seraphim rejoicing at man's blessedness, and welcoming the glorified souls to their heaven. There I find but the shadow of that, whereof the substance is here. There we were so possessed of life, that yet we might forfeit it; here is life without any possibility of death. Temptation could find access thither; here is nothing but a free and complete fruition of blessedness.

"There were delights fit for earthly bodies; here is glory more than can be enjoyed of blessed souls. That was watered with four streams, muddy and impetuous; in this flows the *pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb.** There I find thee only walking in the cool of the day; here manifesting thy majesty continually. There I see only a most pleasant garden, set with all manner of varieties of flourishing and fruitful plants; here I find also the city of God, infinitely rich and magnificent—the building of the wall of it of pure jasper, and the city itself *pure gold like unto clear glass, and the foundations of the walls garnished with all manner of precious stones!*

"All that I can here attain to see is the

* Rev. xxii. 1.

pavement of thy celestial habitation. And, Lord, how glorious it is! How bespangled with the glittering stars, for number, for magnitude, equally admirable! What is the least of them but a world of light; and what are all of them but a confluence of so many thousand worlds of brightness and beauty, met in one firmament? And if this floor of thy heavenly palace be thus richly set forth, how infinite the glory and magnificence there must needs be within!"

So apt, in this connection, are the following beautiful stanzas, that although breaking in upon the current of Bishop Hall's meditations, they cannot be deemed out of place.

"Since, o'er thy footstool here below,
Such radiant gems are strown,
Oh! what magnificence must glow,
My God, around thy throne!

So brilliant here these drops of light—
There the full ocean rolls, how bright!

"If night's blue curtain of the sky,
With thousand stars inwrought,
Hung like a royal canopy
With glittering diamonds fraught,
Be, Lord, thy temple's outer vail,
What splendour at the shrine must dwell!

"The dazzling sun, at noontide hour,
Forth from his flaming vase
Flinging o'er earth the golden shower,
Till vale and mountain blaze,
But shows, O Lord, one beam of thine,
What then the day where thou dost shine!

"Ah! how shall these dim eyes endure
That noon of living rays?
Or how my spirit, so impure,
Upon thy glory gaze?
Anoint, O Lord, anoint my sight,
And robe me for that world of light!"

Again: "As then we shall perfectly love God, and his saints in him, so shall we know both; and though it be a sufficient motive of our love in heaven, that we know them to be saints, yet it seems to be no small addition to our happiness that those saints were once ours. And if it be a just joy to a parent here on earth to see his child gracious, how much more accession shall it be to his joy above, to see the fruits of his loins glorious, when both his love is more pure, and their improvement absolute!"

Addressing the soul in heaven, he says, "How blessed art thou now, where thy soul lives for ever in the continual prospect of the Infinite Beauty and Majesty of God, in the most glorious and eternal sanctuary of heaven! It was but in a cloud and smoke wherein God showed himself in his material house: above,

thou seest him clothed in a heavenly and incomprehensible light, and if a little glimpse of celestial glory, in a momentary transfiguration, so transported the apostle that he wished to dwell with him in Tabor, how shall we be ravished with the full view of that all-glorious Deity whose very sight gives blessedness! Yet, not our eyes alone, but as the soul hath other spiritual senses also, they are wholly possessed of God: our adhesion is, as it were, a heavenly touch, our fruition a heavenly taste of the ever-blessed Deity; so the glorified soul, in seeing God, fully apprehends him, as its own: in apprehending, sweetly enjoys him to all eternity, finding in him more absolute contentment than it can be capable of, and finding itself capable of so much as to make it everlastingly happy."

CHAPTER IV.

E'en the last parting earth can know
Brings not unutterable wo
To souls that heavenward soar;
For humble faith, with steadfast eye,
Points to a brighter world on high,
Where hearts, that here at parting sigh,
May meet to part no more!

It not unfrequently happens that in the parting hours of life, or even weeks and months before the last conflict, the divine Being peculiarly manifests himself to his children, and gives them such glimpses of heaven and its enjoyments as to impart remarkable unction to all their communications on this subject.

It was so in the case of the late lamented Nevins, who, not long before his

own departure, thus wrote:—"I have been thinking of the attractions of heaven—what there is in heaven to draw souls to it. I thought of *the place*. Heaven *has* place. Christ says to his disciples, 'I go to prepare a *place* for you.' It is a part of the consolation with which he comforts them, that heaven is a place, and not a mere state! What a place it must be! Selected out of all the locations of the universe—the chosen spot of space. We see, even on earth, places of great beauty, and we can conceive of spots far more delightful than any we see. But what comparison can these bear to heaven, where every thing exceeds whatever eye has seen or imagination conceived? The earthly paradise must have been a charming spot. But what that to the heavenly? What the paradise assigned to the first Adam, who was of the earth, earthy,

compared with that purchased by the second Adam, who is the Lord from heaven? It is a purchased possession. The price it cost the purchaser every one knows. And having purchased it, he has gone to prepare it—to set in order—to lay out his skill upon it. Oh, what a place Jesus will make—has already made heaven! The place should attract us.

"Then I thought of the freedom of the place from the ills of earth. Not only what *is* in heaven should attract us to it, but what is *not* there. And what is not there? There is no *night* there. Who does not want to go where no night is? No night—no *natural* night—none of its darkness, its damps, its dreariness—and no *moral* night, no ignorance, no misery, no error, no sin. These belong to the night: and there is no night in

heaven. And why no night there? What shines there so perpetually? It is not any natural luminary. It is a *moral* radiance that lights up heaven. 'The glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.' No need have they of other light. This shines everywhere, and on all. All light is sweet, but no light is like this. And not only no night there, but 'no more *curse*.' Christ redeemed them from the curse of the law, being made a curse for them. And 'no more *death*.' The last enemy is overcome at last. Each, as he enters the place, shouts victoriously, 'O death—O grave!' 'Neither *sorrow*.' It is *here*. Oh yes! it *is* here—around—within. We hear it, we see it, and at length we feel it. But it is not there. No *crying*—no expression of grief. 'Neither shall there be any more *pain*, for the former things are passed away.' And

what becomes of *tears?* Are they left to dry up? Nay, God *wipes* them away. And this is a sure sign they will never return. What shall cause weeping, when *He* wipes away tears?

"I have not said that there is no *sin* in heaven. I have not thought that necessary. If sin was there, night would be there, the curse, and death, and all the other evils—the train of sin. These are not there. Therefore sin is not. No, 'we shall be *like* him; for we shall see him as he is.'

"What is there, then, since these are not? *Day* is there—and there is the blessing that maketh rich—and there is *life,* immortality—and since no sorrow, *joy,* fulness of joy—joy unspeakable—and smiles where tears were. And then they *rest,* not from their labours only, but from cares and doubts and fears. And

glory is there, 'an exceeding and eternal weight.'

"Then I thought of the *society*. It is composed of the *élite* of the universe. The various orders of angels, who kept their first estate, as humble as they are high—the excellent of the earth also—all the *choice* spirits of every age and nation—the first man—the first martyr—the translated patriarch—the survivor of the deluge, the friend of God, and his juniors Isaac and Israel—Moses, the lawgiver, and Joshua, the leader of the host—the pious kings—the prophets—the evangelists, and apostles, Paul, John—the martyrs—the reformers—the Puritan fathers—the missionaries, Swartz, Brainerd, Martyn—Carey and Morrison have just gone up.

"Is that all? Where is he who used to lisp 'Father, mother'—thy child? Pass-

ing out of your hands, passed he not into those of Jesus? Yes, you suffered him. If any other than Jesus had said, 'Suffer them to come to me,' you would have said, No. Death does not quench those recently struck sparks of intelligence. Jesus is not going to lose one of those little brilliants. All shall be in his crown.

"Perhaps thou hast a brother or a sister there: that should draw you toward heaven. Perhaps a *mother*—she, whose eye wept while it watched over thee, until at length it grew dim, and closed. Took she not in her cold hand thine, while her heart was yet warm, and said she not, 'I am going to Jesus. Follow me there!'

"Perhaps one nearer, dearer than child, than brother, than mother—the nearest, dearest is there. Shall I say whom? Christian female, thy husband.

Christian father, the young mother of thy babe. *He* is not—*she* is not: for God took them. Has heaven no attractions? Heaven is gaining in attractions every day. True, the principal attractions continue the same, but the lesser ones multiply. Some have attractions there now, which they had not a few months ago. Earth is losing. How fast it has been losing of late! But earth's losses are heaven's gains. They, who have left so many dwelling-places of earth desolate, have gone to their Father's home in heaven. What if they shall not return to us? We shall go to them—that is better.

"But the principal attractions I have not yet mentioned. There is our Father—our Heavenly Father, whom we have so often addressed as such in prayer. He that nourished and brought us up, and has borne us on—he that has watched over

us with an eye that never sleeps, and provided for us with a hand that never tires: and who can pity too! We have never seen our Heavenly Father, but there he reveals himself. There he smiles, and the nations of the saved walk in the light of his countenance.

"And there is He, to depart and be with whom Paul desired, as being far better than to live. There is his glorified humanity. If not having seen, we love him, and in him, 'though now we see him not, yet, believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory,' what will be the love and joy, when we shall 'see him as he is?' There is He. Heaven *has* attractions, many and strong."

Mrs. Rowe, in some of her religious meditations, thus speaks of heaven:—"O blessed eternity! With what a cheerful splendour dost thou dawn on my soul!

With thee comes liberty and peace and love and endless felicity: but pain, and sorrow, and tumult and death, and darkness, vanish before thee for ever. I am just upon the shores of those happy realms where uninterrupted day and eternal spring reside. Yonder are the delectable hills and harmonious vales which continually echo to the songs of angels. There the blissful fields extend their verdure, and there the immortal groves ascend. But how dazzling is thy prospect, O city of God, of whom such glorious things are spoken! In thee there shall be no more night, nor need of the sun or moon, for the throne of God and of the Lamb is in the midst of thee; and the nations that are saved shall walk in thy light, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honour unto thee; and there the glo-

rious Lord shall be to us a place of defence, a place of streams and broad rivers; and the voice of joy and the shout of triumph shall be heard in thee for ever.

'There holy souls perpetual sabbaths keep,
And never are concern'd for food or sleep:
There new-come saints with wreaths of light are crown'd,
While ivory harps and silver trumpets sound:
There flaming seraphs sacred hymns begin,
And raptured cherubs loud responses sing.'

"My eyes shall there 'behold the King in his beauty;' and oh, how ravishing will the aspects of his love be! What unutterable ecstasies shall I feel when I meet those smiles which enlighten heaven and exhilarate all the celestial regions—when I shall view the beatific glory, without one interposing cloud, to eternity—when I shall drink my fill at the

fountains of joy, and in those rivers of pleasure that flow from his right hand for ever!"

"What if we cannot *map* out the landscape of heaven?" says Philip. "We know that it is 'Immanuel's land,' our 'Father's house,' the temple and the throne 'of God and the Lamb.' There is surely enough in all this both to instruct and delight, however little we can make of its sea of glass or its river of life. What if we ought not to attach material ideas to its crowns or palms or harps? They are tokens of divine favour, and of the joy that springs from that favour; and these are ideas equally simple and sublime. What if we can form no idea of the precise *order* in which the general assembly are arranged around the throne? They are around the throne where Deity reigns in unvailed glory!—a

fact so distinct and transporting, that the mind which will dwell on it for a moment will feel incapable of giving a thought to the childish question of local arrangements. The armies of heaven are in the immediate presence of the God of order. That is enough. What, also, if we can form no idea of the precise way in which angels and the redeemed interchange their knowledge and reciprocate their enjoyments; nor of the way in which God and the Lamb communicate their will and feelings to both? There is communion between saints and angels, and between the Godhead and both.

"What, also, if we can neither tell nor conceive whether all things in heaven and throughout the universe will remain for ever exactly as they will subsist at the consummation of time, or whether the cycles of eternity will witness the

creation of new worlds and new orders of beings, and the establishment among them of new systems of moral probation? We know what is better—that God will 'rest in his love' to all the redeemed. No event will ever occur to alienate his heart, or hide his face, or divert his attention from them. Whatever new creations may arise in the universe, they will not displace the church from her rank in his esteem. Whatever orders of angels or worlds may outstrip the rest in the career of improvement, they will never eclipse her; yea, whatever possible modification of moral government may be introduced into any possible creation, the *mediatorial*, under which the church of Christ was formed and perfected, will remain eternally the glory of the divine administration. We shall be for ever with the Lord, whatever other beings

may be brought into existence; and for ever *nearest* to him, whatever new relations he may sustain to new worlds. He will die no more—he lives for ever—and therefore they must be for ever dearest to him, for whom he shed his blood."

"If it be true," says the author of 'Saturday Evening,' "even on earth, that the spot where God is known and worshipped is the residence of joy and the home of pleasure, how emphatically true must it be when we come to speak of the upper world! Are there, indeed, regions where the Creator is unknown, or where his will is resisted? Amazing, terrible truth! Over such regions darkness and horror are spread. But are there worlds, or is there a continent of light, where his presence is visibly declared, and his favour always enjoyed, and his will constantly obeyed? There

abides the 'fulness of joy.' The distinct idea we would insist on is this, that as religion has its commencement in the knowledge of what are termed the natural attributes of God, which, in fact, are subservient only to higher perfections; and as it receives its next considerable enhancement from a knowledge or spiritual perception of his attributes of holiness and goodness; so it shall reach its consummation in an immediate perception or open vision of his unchanging and unsullied blessedness. This absolute felicity of God is the ultimate point of theology; and the eras of eternity shall be occupied in learning all that it comprises."

"In these principles there is comprehended a provision, never to be exhausted, for supplying new enjoyments to pure and intelligent beings. It is

evident that, to active natures, endowed with the power and desire of advancement, the eras of protracted duration must impart continually fresh accessions of capacity for discerning the perfections of the infinite God. That which might not be at all known or conceived of in an early stage, may be comprehended in a stage more advanced; and thus the boundless felicity which none shall ever fathom, will be to all, and for ever, a spring of perpetual pleasures."

CHAPTER V.

Oh the transporting, rapturous scene,
That rises to my sight!
Sweet fields array'd in living green,
And rivers of delight!

An eminent American divine, in a work recently published, says, "The divine oracles exhaust the imagery of earthly joys, and splendours, and glories, to afford inspiring glimpses of heaven. There shine the gates, the walls, the domes, the pinnacles of a celestial city: its battlements are jasper, its pavements are gold, its foundations are jewels, its portals are pearls. Within flows the pure river of the water of life, and fast by it grows the tree whose leaves are for the healing of all nations.

The ransomed are there, with songs, with harps, with crowns, with palms, with spotless, resplendent robes; they shine as the stars and as the brightness of the firmament; they go in to the marriage-supper; they are placed over cities and peoples; they sit with the Lord on his throne; they rest in the peace of an everlasting sabbath.

Figures have no value, except as they express realities; and the figures which the Holy Spirit has employed must be the nearest and truest of all possible expressions, even though the realities be both unseen and inconceivable; therefore, the simple mind which reposes entirely in the figures, and imagines heaven as merely such a scene, is in no error, except that it thinks as a child, and sees through a glass darkly; and it is less in danger of delusion than the

stronger intellect, which casts the figure, and with it the reality, entirely away.

But all is not spoken in figures. The state of the blessed is always described as one where those shall rejoice together, who together have laboured here. Their reward shall be according to their works, and in that kingdom there shall be least and greatest. The reward is enhanced by all those works of love which lay up in store a good foundation against the time to come—a treasure in heaven; and by all sufferings patiently endured for the sake of righteousness. Its delight consists much in the immediate presence of the Lord of glory, and in the perfect enjoyment of his love: the mourners are comforted; the meek inherit the earth; the pure in heart see God.

With even more distinctness it is told us that, though "it doth not yet appear

what we shall be," yet "when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." "So shall we ever be with the Lord," with whom to be is "far better" than all besides. That nearness to the Lord incarnate, that presence with the Son, even after he also shall himself be "subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all," can now be no further comprehended than as we know that God is in Christ—that God is love—that therefore to be with him is to be in perfect love, which is perfect joy. To be with a dear friend and benefactor, with one who is worthy of much love, must always be a high happiness. But in heaven, the redeemed are with Him "who is worthy to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." All love Him who

loved them and redeemed them with his blood; and therefore their voices are lifted to a strain of rapture unspeakable and full of glory.

They are "come," too, "to the spirits of just men made perfect." Heaven has been assembling to itself, through all ages, whatever of true wisdom, virtue and excellence had been seen and admired below. The fellowship of heart with heart and mind with mind is, as we feel, something that should be immortal—something than which there is nothing deeper in our being, except its foundation in its Creator. The fellowship is perfect where, out of every kindred and tongue, people and nation, from every age and every dispensation, no longer exposed to the divisions, the misunderstandings and weaknesses of this world, every barrier removed, and

every fault purified, while the whole government of a Providence, from first to last, shines in the light of its own manifest wisdom, and can no longer be mistaken, the righteous behold with one another the wonderful works of God, and learn and adore, and, in all the depths of their desire and the height of their powers, are satisfied!

That we shall see our Lord "as he is," —that we shall "see face to face,"—is promised, in contrast with our present ignorance and its dim and discoloured vision. It is a joy of which we have intimations here, in all that brings us near to God, or that enables us to behold his footsteps in all his earthly ways, in all true wisdom and knowledge, in study and contemplation and worship. These foretastes can but intimate, like all earthly enjoyments, mingled as they

are, the inherent capacities of the soul: the rest is left for the land of fruition.

But though we now see only through a glass, this earth has things that are made after the pattern of the heavenly things, such as Moses saw in the mount. The ordinances of the Jewish covenant had such a resemblance. Such a resemblance, and more than resemblance, must there be in the ordinances of Christ; and such, we may well believe, is this great temple of nature, in which "are clearly seen the eternal power and Godhead." To the heavenly world sanctified hearts must carry their affections, and doubtless some of their employments. When our Lord sat at his last supper, he said, "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." He surely pointed

forward to some scene of holy joy from which they might point back to that sacramental feast, and recognise the unity of the cup on earth with the cup above.

It is hard to avoid believing that the charm of consecrated music, so subtle, so spiritual, so linked from the beginning, and in its very nature, with worship and praise, and so mingled with the loftiest descriptions of the occupations of heaven, is really to be there prolonged. Of heaven, an excellent writer has said, that 'we only know two things which are there—holy love and holy music;' and another has remarked, 'that it may be boldly assumed that nothing in the whole compass of nature bears so near a resemblance as music to the celestial mode of thanksgiving.' But probably we know many more elements of joy, which here are in their infancy,

and there shall be mature; which here are dim, and there henceforth in perfect radiancy.

"They neither marry," indeed, "nor are given in marriage:" the relations of earth are preserved in memory and in affection, but have ceased to be actuated with the necessities of a state like this. The ties,—if such there shall be,—which shall correspond with those that now bind us in families, orders and commonwealths, can now no more be imagined by us than the scenery of the new heavens and earth themselves. Yet the very names of earth and heaven, of a kingdom, cities, mansions, suggest and signify something that is more like what they express on earth than like any thing which bears a different name, unconsecrated by such applications.

The angels are the highest, noblest,

holiest beings who have ever been disclosed to human thought below the everlasting throne. In the angelic name, all purity and loveliness, all dignity and might, all fervour and energy, all obedience, and favour, and joy, are represented to the soaring conception. The wings of the morning, the white robes of peace, the glow of celestial love, the glory of superhuman intellect, the ministry of perfect benevolence, the impossibility of death, the unfailing, unfaltering fulfilment of that will which is the life of all that live—these are with the angels, and with those who die and rise to be made "equal to the angels, and like the Son of God."

Jeremy Taylor, discoursing of the state of man after death, continues: "Since, then, in the celestial kingdom, there is necessity of nothing, most rich

is he who enters it. By reason of these divine riches, Christ our Saviour, when he speaks in his parables of the kingdom of heaven, doth sometimes call it 'the hidden treasure,' 'the precious pearls.' For if divine happiness consists in the eternal possession of God, what riches may be compared with his who enjoys him, and what inheritance to the kingdom of heaven, and what possession more precious than the divinity, and what more to be desired than the Creator of all things precious, who gives himself for a possession and riches unto the saints, to the end they should abhor those riches which are temporal, if by them the eternal are endangered?

"Heaven is called a kingdom for its immense greatness, and a city for its great beauty and population. It is full of inhabitants of all nations and condi-

tions; where are many thousands of angels, an infinite number of the just, even as many as have died since Abel; and thither also shall repair all such who are to die to the end of the world, and after judgment shall there remain, for ever invested in their glorious bodies. How happy shall it be to live with such persons! The queen of Sheba, only to see Solomon, came from the end of the earth. If there should now descend from heaven one of the apostles or prophets, with what earnestness and admiration would every one strive to see and hear him! In the other world we shall hear and see them *all*. How admirable will it be to see thousands of thousands in all their beauty and greatness, and so many glorious bodies of saints in all their lustre! If one sun be sufficient to clear up the world here be-

low, what joy shall it be to behold those innumerable suns in that region of light!

"So great is the joy of that celestial paradise, that it wholly fills and embraces the blessed souls which enter into heaven, as in an immense sea of pleasure and delight. The joys of the earth enter into the hearts of those who possess them, but fill them not, because the capacity of man's heart is greater than they can satisfy; but the joys of heaven, in the blessed, enter into themselves, and fill and overflow them in all parts. The multitude of joys in heaven is joined with their greatness, and so great they are, that the very least of them is sufficient to make us forget the greatest contests of the earth, and so many they are, that though a thousand times shorter, yet they would exceed all temporal pleasures, though a thousand times

longer; but joining the abundance of those eternal joys with their immense greatness, that eternal bliss becomes ineffable. So great are the joys of heaven, that all the arithmeticians of the earth cannot number them, the geometricians cannot measure them, nor the most learned in the world explicate them. The just shall rejoice in what is above them, which is the vision of God; in what is below them, which is the beauty of heaven and the blessed souls; in what is within them, which is the glorification of their bodies; in what is with them, which is the company of angels and men made perfect. * * *

"All those joys of the blessed, both in soul and body, which are innumerable, have their source and origin from that unspeakable joy of the clear vision of God. And how can joy be less which proceeds

from such a cause, who gives himself to be possessed by men? That joy being the very same which God enjoys, and which suffices to make God himself blessed with a blessedness equal to himself. Therefore not without great mystery it is said, 'Enter into the joy of thy Lord.' It is not said simply into joy, but to determine the greatness of it, it was his own joy—that joy by which he himself becomes happy.

"The blessed, besides that supreme knowledge of the Creator, shall know the divine mysteries, the secrets of Providence, the frame and making of the world, the whole artifice of nature, the motions of the stars, the properties of the planets and of all created entities; all of which they shall not only know jointly and in mass, but clearly and distinctly without confusion. This shall be

the life of the understanding, which shall feast itself with such high and certain truths.

"The blessed shall receive more knowledge in one instant, than the wise of the world have obtained with all their watchings, travels and experiences. There shall the memory also live, representing unto us the divine benefits, and rendering eternal thanks unto the Author of all. The soul, rejoicing in its own happiness to have received so great mercies, and remembering the dangers from which it hath been freed by divine favour, shall sing that verse in the psalm, 'The snare is broken, and we are delivered.' The remembrance of acts of virtue and good works will be a particular joy unto the blessed, both in respect that they were a means of our happiness, and of pleasing so gracious and

good a Lord. In heaven we shall not only joy in the memory of those things wherein we have pleased God, in complying with his holy will and in ordering and disposing our life in his service, but also in the troubles and dangers we have passed. The memory of death is bitter to those who are to die; but unto the just, who have already passed it, and are secure in heaven, nothing can be more pleasant; for they now, to their unspeakable joy, know themselves to be free from infirmity, death and danger. There also shall live the will, rejoicing to see all its desires accomplished, with the abundance and sweet society of so many felicities, being necessitated to love so admirable a beauty as the soul enjoys and possesses in God Almighty. Love makes all things sweet; and as it is a torment to be separated from what one

loves, so it is a great joy and felicity to remain with the beloved; and therefore the blessed, loving God more than themselves, how unspeakable a comfort must it be to enjoy God and the society of those whom they so much affect!

"Every one shall then rejoice as much in the felicity of another as in his own ineffable joy, and shall possess as many joys as he shall find companions. There are all things which are necessary and delightful, all riches, ease and comfort. Where God is, nothing is wanting. All there know God without error, behold him without end, praise him without weariness, love him without tediousness, and in this love, repose themselves in God. Besides all this, the security which the will shall have in the eternal possession of this felicity, is an unspeakable joy. The fear that the good things which we enjoy are

to end, or, at least, may end, mingles wormwood with our joy, and pleasures do not relish where there is danger. But this celestial happiness, being eternal, neither shall nor can end, diminish, or be endangered, but with this security, adds a new joy unto those others of the saints.

"But above all, with what content and admiration shall we behold the glorious body of Christ our Redeemer, in comparison of whose splendour that of all the saints shall be as darkness, and from whose wounds shall issue forth rays of peculiar brightness! Besides all this, the glory and greatness of the empyreal heaven and the lustre of that celestial city shall infinitely delight the blessed citizens; the ears shall be filled with most harmonious music, as may be gathered from many passages of Scripture. What sweetness will it be to hear so many heavenly

musicians—those millions of angels, who will be sounding forth their hallelujahs unto the great God of heaven and earth!

"Happy were I, and for ever happy, if after death, I might hear the melody of those hymns and hallelujahs which the citizens of that celestial habitation and the squadron of those blessed spirits sing in praise of the Eternal King. This is that sweet music which St. John heard in the Revelation, when the inhabitants of heaven sang, 'Let all the world bless thee, O Lord! To thee be given all honour and dominion for a world of worlds.' Amen."

CHAPTER VI.

"And thou shalt walk in soft, white light, with kings and priests abroad,
And thou shalt summer high in bliss, upon the hills of God."

AIRD.

JOHN BUNYAN, in his inimitable allegory—of world-wide fame—after conducting the Christian pilgrim through the trials and temptations of the world, at length brings him to the path that leads to heaven, and, as his description of the celestial city is so accurately scriptural, it will not be inappropiate to transcribe a few passages.

"The talk the pilgrims had with the shining ones was about the glory of the place: who told them that the beauty and glory of it was inexpressible. There,

said they, is 'the Mount Sion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect.' You are going now, said they, to the paradise of God, where you shall see the tree of life, and eat the never-fading fruits thereof; and when you come there, you shall have white robes given you, and your walk and talk shall be every day with the King, even all the days of eternity. There you shall not see again such things as you saw when you were in the lower regions upon the earth: to wit, sorrow, sickness, affliction, and death; 'for the former things are passed away.' You are going now to Abraham, to Isaac, and Jacob, and to the prophets, men that God hath taken away from the evil to come, and that are now resting upon their beds, each one walking in his righteousness. The men then

asked, What must we do in the holy place? To whom it was answered, You must there receive the comfort of all your toil, and have joy for all your sorrow: you must reap what you have sown, even the fruit of all your prayers and tears and sufferings for the King by the way. In that place you must wear crowns of gold, and enjoy the perpetual sight and vision of the Holy One, for 'there you shall see him as he is.' Then also you shall serve him continually with praise, with shouting and thanksgiving, whom you desired to serve in the world, though with much difficulty, because of the infirmity of your flesh. There your eyes shall be delighted with seeing, and your ears with hearing the pleasant voice of the Mighty One. There you shall enjoy your friends again that are gone thither before you, and there you shall,

with joy, receive even every one that follows into the holy place after you. There also you shall be clothed with glory and majesty, and put in an equipage fit to ride out with the King of Glory. When he shall come with sound of trumpet in the cloud, as upon the wings of the wind, you shall come with him: and when he shall sit upon the throne of judgment, you shall sit by him: yea, and when he shall pass sentence upon all the workers of iniquity, let them be angels or men, you shall also have a voice in that judgment, because they were his and your enemies. Also, when he shall again return to the city, you shall go too with sound of trumpet, and be ever with him.

"Now while they were thus drawing toward the heavenly gate, behold a company of the heavenly host came out to

meet them: to whom it was said by the other two shining ones, These are the men that have loved our Lord when they were in the world, and that have left all for his holy name: and he hath sent us to fetch them, and we have brought them thus far on their desired journey, that they may go in and look their Redeemer in the face with joy. Then the heavenly host gave a great shout, saying, 'Blessed are they that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.' There came out also, at this time, to meet them, several of the King's trumpeters, clothed in white, and with shining raiment, who, with melodious voices and loud, made even the heavens to echo with their sound. These trumpeters saluted Christian and his fellow with ten thousand welcomes from the world: and this they did with shouting and sound of trumpet.

"This done, they compassed them round on every side: some went before, some behind, and some on the right hand, and some on the left, (as it were to guard them through the upper regions,) continually sounding, as they went, with melodious noise, in notes on high: so that the very sight was, to them that could behold it, as if heaven was come down to meet them. Thus therefore they walked on together; and as they walked, ever and anon these trumpeters, even with joyful sound, would by mixing their music with looks and gestures, still signify to Christian and his brother how welcome they were into their company, and with what gladness they came to meet them. And now were these two men, as it were, in heaven before they came at it, being swallowed up with the sight of angels, and hearing of their melodious

notes. Here also, they had the city itself in view: and thought they heard all the bells therein to ring to welcome them thereto. But above all, the warm and joyful thoughts that they had about their own dwelling with such company, and that for ever and ever! Oh! by what tongue or pen can their glorious joy be expressed! Thus they came up to the gate.

"Now when they were come up to the gate, there was written over it in letters of gold, 'Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.'

"Then I saw in my dream, that the shining men bid them call at the gate; the which, when they did, some from above looked over the gate, to wit, Enoch, Moses, and Elijah, and to whom

it was said, 'These pilgrims come from the City of Destruction, for the love that they bear to the King of this place;' and then the pilgrims gave in unto them each man his certificate, which they had received in the beginning: those, therefore, were carried in to the King, who, when he had read them, said, 'Where are the men?' To whom it was answered, 'They are standing without the gate.' The King then commanded to open the gate, 'that the righteous nation,' said he, 'that keepeth truth may enter in.'

"Now I saw in my dream, that these two men went in at the gate, and lo! as they entered, they were transfigured, and they had raiment put on them that shone like gold. There were also that met them with harps and crowns, and gave them to them; the harps to praise withal, and the crowns in token of ho-

nour. Then I heard in my dream, that all the bells in the city rang again for joy, and that it was said unto them, 'Enter ye into the joy of our Lord.' I also heard the men themselves, that they sang with a loud voice, saying, 'Blessing and honour and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.'

"Now, just as the gates were opened to let in the men, I looked in after them, and behold the city shone like the sun; the streets were also paved with gold, and in them walked many men, with crowns on their heads, and golden harps to sing praises withal.

"They were also of them that had wings, and they answered one another without intermission, saying, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord.' And after that they

shut up the gates, which, when I had seen, I wished myself among them."

HEAVEN.

Oh talk to me of heaven! I love
To hear about my home above;
For there doth many a loved one dwell
In light and joy ineffable.
Oh tell me how they shine and sing,
While every harp rings echoing:
And every glad and tearless eye
Beams like the bright sun, gloriously.
Tell me of that victorious palm
  Each hand in glory beareth;
Tell me of that celestial calm
  Each face in glory weareth.

O happy, happy country! Where
  There entereth not a sin;
And death, who keeps its portals fair,
  May never once come in.
No grief can change their day to night,
The darkness of that land is light;

Sorrow and sighing God hath sent
Far thence to endless banishment.
And never more may one dark tear
Bedim their burning eyes;
For every one they shed while here
In fearful agonies,
Glitters a bright and dazzling gem
In their immortal diadem.

O lovely, blooming country! There
Flourishes all that we deem fair;
And though no fields nor forests green,
Nor bowery gardens there are seen,
Nor perfumes load the breeze,
Nor hears the ear material sound,
Yet joys at God's right hand are found—
The archetypes of these.
There is the home, the land of birth
Of all we highest prize on earth;
The storms that rack this world beneath
Must there for ever cease;
The only air the blessed breathe
Is purity and peace.

O happy, happy land! In thee
Shines the unveil'd divinity,
Shedding through each adoring breast
A holy calm, a halcyon rest.
And those blest souls whom death did sever
Have met to mingle joys for ever.
Oh, soon may heaven unclose to me!
Oh, soon may I that glory see!
And my faint, weary spirit stand
Within that happy, happy land!

CHAPTER VII.

Go, wing thy flight from star to star,
From world to luminous world, as far
As the universe spreads its flaming wall;
Take all the pleasures of all the spheres,
And multiply each through endless years,
One minute of heaven is worth them all.

No mere man has seemed to be more fully imbued with that spirit which is an antepast of heaven, than he who, in distress and persecution, in torture and in prison, could look forward to his departure from this world as but the commencement of his *life*—a life infinitely precious and blissful. His musings on the heavenly rest have thrilled with delight the souls of thousands. He has "entered into his rest," and doubtless is united with many who were cheered and comforted by his words of "holy hope

and high humility." Ay, and many more, yet lingering here below, encouraged by his delightful representations of the "recompense of reward," are struggling on for the same victory, hoping to reach the same "house of many mansions," and to rest in the bosom of the same Saviour. Hear Richard Baxter as he dilates on the happiness of heaven.

"Oh the delight we shall have when we come to our rest, in beholding the face of the living God, and in singing forth praises unto him and the Lamb! How delightful it will be to my soul to drink of that 'fountain of living water,' which whoso drinketh of shall thirst no more! How delightful are grateful odours to the smell, or music to the ear, or beautiful sights to the eye! What fragrance, then, hath the precious oint-

ment which is poured on the head of our glorified Saviour, and which must be poured on the head of all his saints, and will fill all heaven with its odour! How delightful is the music of the heavenly host! How pleasing will be those real beauties above! How glorious the 'building not made with hands,' the house that God himself dwells in, the walks and prospects in the city of God and the celestial paradise!

"Compare, also, the delights above with those we find in natural knowledge. These are far beyond the delights of sense; but how much further are the delights of heaven! What exquisite pleasure it is to dive into the secrets of nature, and find out the mysteries of the arts and sciences, especially if we make a new discovery in any one of them! What high delights are there then in the

knowledge of God and Christ! * * * What excellency will there be in our heavenly perfection, and in that uncreated perfection of God, which we shall behold! * * *

"If the delights of close and cordial friendship be so great, what delight shall we have in the friendship of the Most High, and in our mutual intimacy with Jesus Christ, and in the dearest love of the saints! Surely this will be a stricter friendship than these, more lovely and desirable friends than ever the sun beheld, and both our affections to our Father and our Saviour, and especially theirs to us, will be such as we never knew here. As all the works and attributes of God are incomprehensible, so is this of love: he will love us infinitely beyond our most perfect love to him. What, then, will there be in this mutual love!

"Compare, also, the excellencies of heaven with those glorious works of creation which our eyes now behold. What wisdom, power, and goodness manifested therein! How does the majesty of the Creator shine in this fabric of the world! What glory is there in the least of yonder stars! What a vast resplendent body is yonder moon, and every planet! What an inconceivable glory hath the sun! But all this is nothing to the glory of heaven. Yonder sun is but darkness to the lustre of my Father's house. I shall myself be glorious as that sun. This whole earth is but my Father's footstool.

"Look over the mercies of thy youth and riper age, of prosperity and adversity, of thy several places and relations; are they not excellent and innumerable, rich and engaging? Think,

then, if my pilgrimage and warfare have such mercies, what shall I find in my home and triumph? If God communicates so much to me while I remain a sinner, what will he bestow when I am a perfected saint? If I have had so much at a distance from him, what shall I have in his immediate presence, when I shall ever stand before his throne? * * *

"Oh blessed rest, where we 'rest not day nor night, saying, Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty!'—where we shall rest from sin, but not from worship—from sorrow and suffering, but not from joy! Oh blessed day! when I shall rest with God!—when I shall rest in knowing, loving, rejoicing, and praising!—when my perfect soul and body shall together perfectly enjoy the most perfect God!—when God, who is love itself,

shall perfectly love me, and rest in his love to me, as I shall in my love to him, and rejoice over me with joy, and joy over me with singing, as I shall rejoice in him!

"Now, blessed saints! that have believed and obeyed, this is the end of faith and patience. This is it for which you prayed and waited. Do you now repent your sorrows and sufferings, your self-denial and holy walking? Are your tears of repentance now bitter or sweet? See, how the Judge smiles upon you: there is love in his looks. The titles of Redeemer, Husband, Head, are written in his amiable, shining face. Hark! he calls you. He bids you stand here on his right hand. Fear not, for there he sets his sheep. Oh, joyful sentence! '*Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!*' He

takes you by the hand—the door is open, the kingdom is his, and therefore yours: there is your place before his throne. The Father receives you as the spouse of his Son, and bids you welcome to the crown of glory. Ever so unworthy, you must be crowned. Oh blessed grace! Oh blessed love! This is that joy which was procured by sorrow, that crown which was procured by the cross! Here must I live with all the saints. Oh comfortable meeting of my old acquaintances, with whom I wept and prayed and suffered, and spoke often of this day and place! I see the grave could not detain you: the same love hath redeemed and saved you also.

"This is not like our cottages of clay, our prisons, our earthly dwellings. Oh what a mighty change is this! From a vile body to this, which *shines as the*

brightness of the firmament! From a sense of God's displeasure to the perfect enjoyment of him in love! From all my doubts and fears to this possession which puts me out of doubt! From all my fearful thoughts of death to this joyful life! Blessed change! Farewell sin and sorrow, for ever: farewell my proud, unbelieving heart; my worldly, sensual, carnal heart; and welcome now my most holy, heavenly nature. Farewell, repentance, faith and hope; and welcome love and joy and praise. I shall now have my harvest without ploughing or sowing—my joy without a preacher or a promise, even all from the face of God himself. Whatever mixture is in the streams, there is nothing but pure joy in the fountain. Here shall I be encircled with eternity, and ever live, and ever, ever praise the Lord. My face will not wrinkle, nor my hair be

gray: for 'this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal immortality, and death shall be swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory!' The date of my lease will no more expire, nor shall I trouble myself with thoughts of death, nor lose my joys through fear of losing them. When millions of ages are passed, my glory is but beginning; and when millions more are passed, it is no nearer ending. Every day is all noon, every month is harvest, every year a jubilee, every age is full manhood, and all this is one eternity. A blessed eternity! the glory of my glory, the perfection of my perfection!

"Oh the blessed tranquillity of that region, where there is nothing but sweet peace! Oh healthful place, where none are sick! Oh fortunate land, where all are

kings! Oh holy assembly where all are priests! How free a state where none are servants but to their Supreme Monarch! The poor man shall be no more tired with his labours—no more hunger or thirst, cold or nakedness—no piercing frosts nor scorching heats. Our faces shall be no more pale or sad; no more breaches in friendship, or parting of friends asunder; no more trouble accompanying our relations, nor voice of lamentation heard in our dwellings. 'God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes.'

"The last jewel of our crown is that it will be an *everlasting rest.* Without this all were comparatively nothing. The very thought of leaving it would imbitter all our joys. Oh blessed eternity! where our lives are perplexed with no such thoughts, nor our joys interrupted with any such fears; where we shall be

'pillars in the temple of God, and go no more out.' While we were servants, we held by lease, and that only for the term of a transitory life, but 'the son abideth for ever.'"

With such a faith in the unseen world, with such a foreshadowing of its glories, one is almost tempted to exclaim with the poet—

"Not always on the journey, O my God!
Not always on the journey, when the home,
The place thou hast prepared for my abode,
Stands open to receive me, when I come!
Why should I wish to linger
In the wild,
When thou art waiting, Father,
To receive thy child?

"It is a weary way, and I am faint:
I pant for purer air, and fresher springs:
O Father! take me home; there is a taint,
A shadow on earth's purest, brightest things.

This world is but a wilderness
To me:
There is no rest, my God,
Apart from thee."

But the care-laden, depressed, life-weary soul can yet rejoice to continue on earth, so long as God has work for him here, buoyed up by the hope that "there *remaineth a rest* for the people of God."

CHAPTER VIII.

RECOGNITION OF FRIENDS IN HEAVEN.

Beyond the flight of time,
  Beyond the reign of death,
There surely is some blessed clime
  Where life is not a breath,
Nor life's affections transient fire,
Whose sparks fly upward and expire.

There is a world above,
  Where parting is unknown,
A long eternity of love,
  Form'd for the good alone:
And faith beholds the dying here,
Translated to that glorious sphere.

THERE is an almost universal belief in the reunion of Christian friends in a world of bliss, while at the same time many doubt the scriptural authority for it, considering it rather as a pleasant,

harmless fancy than as a well-grounded faith. The opinion of some eminent writers may perhaps strengthen confidence in this delightful faith.

Says one, in the strong assurance of the truth of this doctrine, "After that last great change even, shall 'we know as also we are known.' When the apostle speaks of his converts as 'his crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming,' did he not expect to know them? Did not Lazarus know father Abraham, in whose bosom he was? In Hades, when the kings and princes of the earth rose up to meet the king of Babylon, did they not know him? This point seems everywhere in Scripture to be taken for granted."

"We must think of heaven," says Hamilton, "as an existing reality. It is

that which we should bring near to ourselves, for our brethren and kinsmen, sainted and glorified in heaven, have their present beatitudes, their present splendours, their present songs. Let us think of them, therefore, as only separated from us by a vail, and as absolutely and truly thinking and feeling as any of ourselves. But that vail will soon be torn aside; we shall soon ourselves have entered that region of spirits. Will there be those who shall be ready to welcome us? Shall there be those whom we ourselves can remember? That is not a barren speculation: it is that which surely has engaged every thinking mind and every susceptible heart. * * * The first Christian teachers always rested their labours upon a reward: they did not deny that they contemplated a reward which con-

sisted in the conversion, in the salvation, and in the glory of those spirits whom they had instrumentally rescued and saved. 'For what is our hope, our joy, our crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and our joy?' 'That I may rejoice in the day of the Lord that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.' 'Look to yourselves, that ye receive a full reward.' 'That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.' Now all this surely is confirmation strong—the confirmation of Holy Writ—that the apostles anticipated a reward, and that that reward cannot for a moment be separated from their recognition of those who were the fruits of their ministry and the seals of their zeal. * * *

"Now, granting that the doctrine is rather assumed in Scripture than stated and illustrated, yet, as all was truly implied, what evidence can be more distinct, what testimony more perfect, than that which we have now cited? When standing near the grave of Bethany, our Lord says, 'Believest thou this?' and when more directly, 'Thy brother shall rise again;' was it to be that that brother was to be absorbed and lost in the myriads and millions of spirits, so that the sisters, who had lately laid him in the grave, should see him and know him no more? * * *

"But shall we not, (and we honour the sensitiveness of the objection,) shall we not be so enwrapt in the vision of the Lamb—so enamoured of the glory of the beauty of him who is in the midst of the throne—that there can be no va-

cancy in our eye for the creature, and not one nook in the heart in which a creature shall be enshrined? There is something honourable but mistaken in the objection, because do we not *here* honour the Saviour? Said Paul, 'They glorify God in me;' and there were those on earth of whom he spake as being the glory of Christ. Christ was therefore magnified in them. And when there are harpers harping with their harps, and multitudes uniting in vocal chorus, will not the union of those sounds and the swell of those acclamations, induce each other to love the Saviour, as they are acquainted with each, entering into each other's sympathies and each other's joy?"

Another derives from this doctrine great incentives to active usefulness, and asserts that the teacher of religion, in every sphere, when most disheartened, is

cheered by the thought "that there is perhaps some one, now his persecutor, who may be his eternal joy; that there is peradventure one who is throwing all his ridicule upon him, who shall yet rejoice with him in the mansions of their common Father's house. There is a child most hopeless, and apparently most irreclaimable: a few more years, the child is lost to the teacher, the teacher to the child; and now the teacher, unnoticed and unheard of, enters on his reward. What spirit comes and greets him now? That vacant face, (but oh! you have made it radiant,) that idle hand, (but oh! you have taught it to strike the golden harp,) that bitter voice, (but oh! you have made it musical with the anthems of heaven,) lives, and that very one whom you despaired of, comes to bless you, to invite you, to repay you."

And is not this the very thought involving the fact of recognition?—"If any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." That both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together?

As a poet sings—

"It is a beautiful and soothing thought,
That when mankind shall meet beyond the tomb,
There may be found some spirits *we* have taught
To fix their hopes upon that world to come;
That e'en their final, their decisive doom
May be affected by the care they knew.
Oh! it were worth long years of toil and gloom
To see that vision rise from life's review,
Trusting to sleep in Christ, and wake to find it true."

Still another says, "Now it cannot be imagined that our knowledge in the

heavenly state will be more limited than it is here. The whole of the apostle's argument in reference to this subject is intended to prove the reverse. He says, 'Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known.' We are endued with social natures; but the purposes for which these are given us cannot be attained, unless we are capable of knowing the beings by whom we are surrounded. And unless at death the faculties of the mind are changed, believers will have the same social natures they had while on earth; and to receive all the gratifications of which they are capable, they must have the power of recognising their celestial associates.

"We are confirmed in this persuasion from the account which is given of the

transfiguration of our Saviour. While the 'fashion of his countenance was altered, his raiment white and glistering, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias. And it came to pass as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.' Here we learn that some of the followers of Christ were enabled, when in this world, to distinguish two of the spirits of the just. And if, in any situation, while on earth, we can be made capable of knowing departed saints, we are at a loss to understand why this high privilege may not be enjoyed, when, through the grace of God, we shall have entered the abodes of bliss. Not only did Peter know them, but no doubt Moses and Elias knew each other while

they spake of the decease of Christ and the glory that should follow. Nor can any reason be given why glorified believers should not, like the apostles, designate among the shining ranks these venerable prophets and, like Peter, exclaim in transports of joy, 'It is good for us to be here.'

"Christians are justified in the expectation, not only of knowing, but of holding sweet and high communion with patriarchs and prophets and apostles of former ages. The Saviour himself says that "many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven;" evidently implying that from distant regions of the earth the faithful will be gathered together, and know and hold exalted communion with each other. It is not, there-

fore, too much to anticipate that parents and their children, ministers and their people, missionaries and their heathen converts, who were endeared to each other by the principles of piety and goodness on earth, shall renew the pleasures of their intercourse under the most auspicious circumstances in heaven."

RECOGNITION.

I felt that however long to me
The slumber of the grave might be,
I should know him again mid the countless throng
Who shall bear their part in the seraphim's song.

L. E. LANDON.

How shall we know them—the holy dead,
Whom we left alone in their narrow bed?
What if remembrance have power to trace
Minutest lines of each buried face?
What if the form we so fondly love,
With us, in dreams of affection, move?
We had look'd our last on a marble brow,
We brook not to think it alter'd now;

But great and total the change must be
Ere it put off the garb of mortality.

How shall we know *him*—the one who died
Like a shock of corn in autumn pride:
Her, whom we knew by her pallid cheek,
By sickness blighted, by grief made weak?
Not by the gleam of their silver hair,
Not by the traces of time and care;
But by the feelings more deeply shrined,
The feelings that dwell in the changeless mind:
By a child-like love—the love we felt
In earthly homes, where our parents dwelt.

How shall we know them—who pass'd away
In all the freshness of early day;
Those whom we cherish'd in later years,
From whom we parted with bitter tears?
Not by the beauty which mark'd them then,
Or, were it such, it must fade again;
But by a gladness which round them plays,
Like a joy revived from our olden days;
By the holy joys our spirits knew,
Which a better world shall again renew.

How shall we know them—the infant race,
How will the mother her loved one trace?
Not by the glance of his sunny eye,
'Twas but a gleam o'er mortality;
Not by his look, when he sank to rest,
A closing flower on her throbbing breast:
But by a feeling like that which burn'd,
When her heart o'er the guileless stranger yearn'd;
By a thrill like that, which, when first he smiled,
Came o'er her soul, will she know her child.

"Can we make any doubt," says another, "that the blessed angels know each other? How senseless were it to grant that knowledge is hid from them, but of themselves! Or, can we imagine that those angelic spirits do not take special notice of those souls which they have guarded here and conducted to their glory? If they do, and if the knowledge of our beatified souls shall be like to their's, why should we abridge our

souls, more than them, of the comfort of our interknowing? Surely, our dissolution shall abate nothing of our natural faculties: our glory shall advance them, so that what we once knew we shall know better; and if our souls can perfectly know themselves, why should they be denied the knowledge of others? Doubt not then, O my soul, but thou shalt once see, besides the face of thy God whose glory fills heaven and earth, the blessed spirits of the ancient patriarchs and prophets; the holy apostles and evangelists; the glorious martyrs and confessors: those eminent saints whose holiness thou wert wont to magnify, and among them, those in whom nature and grace have especially interested thee: thou shalt see them and enjoy their joy, and they thine."

CHAPTER IX.

Cease, then, fond nature! cease thy tears;
Religion points on high,
There everlasting Spring appears,
And joys that cannot die.

STEELE.

HAVING thus appropriated the heavenly musings and contemplations of some of the saints of God, who have already gone to share in the bliss of those celestial abodes of which they thought and wrote while on earth; having also dwelt upon the meditations on the same delightful theme of some yet lingering below, rejoicing in the sure hope of a blessed immortality, we may proceed to examine the language of inspiration. Fitly, to the conjectures and belief of saints on earth and saints in heaven,

may the unerring testimony of the Lord of heaven, in which is no doubt and no fallibility, be offered as a climax.

What then is heaven?

I. It is the abode of God and of Christ, their peculiar dwelling-place.

"The Lord's throne is *in heaven*."*

"That they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is *in heaven*." "That you may be the children of your Father which is *in heaven*." "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is *in heaven* is perfect."† "Otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is *in heaven*." "Our Father, which art *in heaven*."‡ "But he that doeth the will of my Father which is *in heaven*."§ "For flesh and blood hath not

* Ps. xi. 4.
† Matt. v. 16, 45, 48.
‡ Matt. vi. 1, 9.
§ Matt. vii. 21.

revealed it unto them, but my Father which is *in heaven*."* "For one is your Father, which is *in heaven*."†

"And he (Christ) was parted from them and carried up *into heaven*."‡

"The second man is the Lord *from heaven*."§

"Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, who is passed into the *heavens*, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession."‖

"And no man hath ascended into heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man, which is *in heaven*."**

"Knowing that your Master also is *in heaven*."††

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* Matt. xvi. 17.
† Matt. xxiii. 9.
‡ Luke xxiv. 51.
§ 1 Cor. xv. 47.
‖ Heb. iv. 14.
** John iii. 13.
†† Eph. vi. 9.

"By the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is gone *into heaven*, and is on the right hand of God."*

"God is *in heaven*, and thou upon earth."†

"Thus saith the Lord, *the heaven* is my throne."‡

"Do not I fill *heaven* and earth? saith the Lord."§

II. It is the abode of angels.

"The chariots of God are *twenty thousand, even thousands of angels;* the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, *in the holy place.*"||

"For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the *angels of God in heaven.*"** "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no.

* 1 Pet. iii. 21, 22.
† Ecc. v. 1.
‡ Isa. lxvi. 1.
§ Jer. xxiii. 24.
|| Ps. lxviii. 17.
** Matt. xxii. 30.

not the *angels of heaven*, but my Father only."* "And behold there was a great earthquake; for the *angel of the Lord* descended *from heaven*, and came and rolled back the stone from the door."†

"But are as the *angels which are in heaven*.‡

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good-will toward men. And it came to pass as the *angels were gone away from them into heaven*, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem."§ "And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom."‖ "And there appeared unto

* Matt. xxiv. 36. † Matt. xxviii. 2.
‡ Mark xii. 25. § Luke ii. 13, 15.
‖ Luke xvi. 22.

him an *angel from heaven*, strengthening him."*

"But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an *innumerable company of angels*."†

"And I beheld, and I heard the voice of *many angels round about the throne*, and the beasts, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands."‡ "*And all the angels stood round about the throne*."§

III. It is the Christian's home.

"Rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your *reward in heaven*."‖ "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that

* Luke xxii. 43.
† Heb. xii. 22.
‡ Rev. v. 11.
§ Rev. vii. 11.
‖ Matt. v. 12.

thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have *treasure in heaven.*"*

"For we know that, if this earthly house of our tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, *eternal in the heavens.*"†

"Knowing in yourselves that ye have *in heaven* a better and an enduring substance." "But now they desire a better country, that is an heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city." "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."‡ "But ye are come unto Mount Zion, * * * * to the general assembly and church

* Matt. xix. 21.
† 2 Cor. v. 1.
‡ Heb. x. 34; xi. 16; xi. 10.

of the first-born, which are written in heaven."*

"To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, *reserved in heaven* for you."†

"But rather rejoice, because your names are *written in heaven*."‡

"For the hope *which is laid up for you in heaven*."§

IV. Its bliss is endless.

"And they shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars *for ever and ever*."‖

"Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and *in the world to come life everlasting*."¶ "*Neither can they*

* Heb. xii. 22, 23.
† 1 Pet. i. 4.
‡ Matt. x. 20.
§ Col. i. 5.
‖ Dan. xii. 3.
¶ Luke xviii. 30.

die any more, for they are equal unto the angels."*

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and *eternal weight of glory*. For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things *which are not seen are eternal*." "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, *eternal in the heavens*."†

"They which are called might receive the promise of *eternal inheritance*."‡

"To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that *fadeth not away*, reserved in heaven for you." "The God of all grace, who hath called us unto *his eternal glory*, by Christ Jesus."§

* Luke xx. 36. † 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18; v. 1.
‡ Heb. ix. 15. § 1 Pet. i. 4; v. 10.

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and *he shall go no more out.*" "And they shall reign *for ever and ever.*"*

V. If we seek from the pages of inspiration a description of heaven, its inhabitants, its employments and enjoyments, we find it as ample as it is delightful. We may begin with the foreshadowings of the Old Testament.

"He will swallow up death in victory, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces." "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs of everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."† "The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness

* Rev. iii. 12; xxii. 5. † Isa. xxv. 8; xxxv. 10.

shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended."*

"Likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth."†

"Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, and so shall we ever be with the Lord."‡

"There remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his."§ "But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living

* Isa. lx. 19, 20.
† Luke xv. 7.
‡ 1 Thess. iv. 17.
§ Heb. iv. 9, 10.

God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel."*

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."†

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for those that love him. But God hath revealed *them* unto

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* Heb. xii. 22–24. † 1 John iii. 2.

us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."*

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess him before my Father and his angels."† "And immediately I was in the Spirit, and behold a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat on the throne was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone; and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats, and on the seats were four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. And before the throne there was a sea

* 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10. † Rev. iii. 5.

of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne and round about the throne were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him, and they were full of eyes within; and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. And when those beasts give glory, and honour, and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."*

* Rev. iv. 2–4, 8–11.

"And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation: and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches,

and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. Amen. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever."* "After this, I beheld, and lo! a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and with palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice,

* Rev. v. 8–14.

saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders, and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the

throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb which is in the midst of them shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."* "And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and reigned."† "And I looked, and lo! a Lamb stood on the Mount Sion, and with him an hundred and forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard

* Rev. vii. 9–12. † Rev. xi. 16, 17.

a voice from heaven as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps. And they sung, as it were, a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth."* "And I saw, as it were, a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty: just and

* Rev. xiv. 1–3.

true are thy ways, thou King of saints."* "And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he said unto me, write, Blessed are they which are called to the supper of the Lamb."† "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God, out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of

* Rev. xv. 2, 3. † Rev. xix. 5–9.

heaven, saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he carried me away in the spirit, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the walls of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper: the second sapphire: the third a chalcedony:

the fourth an emerald: the fifth, sardonyx: the sixth, sardius: the seventh, chrysolite: the eighth, beryl: the ninth a topaz: the tenth a chrysoprasus: the eleventh a jacinth: the twelfth an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it, and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and their honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they

shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall, in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."* "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manners of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it: and his servants shall serve him. And they shall see his face, and his name shall be in

* Rev. xxi. 2–4; 17–27.

their foreheads. And there shall be no night there: and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever. *Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.*"*

THE LAND WHICH NO MORTAL MAY KNOW.

Though earth has full many a beautiful spot,
As poet or painter might show,
Yet more lovely and beautiful, holy and bright,
To the hopes of the heart and the spirit's glad sight,
Is the land that no mortal may know.

There the crystalline stream, bursting forth from the throne,

* Rev. xxii. 1–5, 14.

Flows on, and for ever will flow:
Its waves, as they roll, are with melody rife,
And its waters are sparkling with beauty and life,
In the land which no mortal may know.

And there, on its margin, with leaves ever green,
With its fruits, healing sickness and wo,
The fair tree of life, in its glory and pride,
Is fed by that deep, inexhaustible tide,
Of the land that no mortal may know.

There, too, are the lost! whom we loved on this earth,
With whose mem'ries our bosoms yet glow:
Their relics we gave to the place of the dead,
But their glorified spirits before us have fled
To the land which no mortal may know.

There the pale orb of light and the fountain of day
Nor beauty, nor splendour bestow:
But the presence of Him, the unchanging I Am!
And the holy, the pure, the immaculate Lamb!
Light the land which no mortal may know.

Oh! who but must pine, in this dark vale of tears,
From its clouds and its shadows to go?
To walk in the light of the glory above,
And to share in the peace and the joy and the love
Of the land which no mortal may know.

CHAPTER X.

There is a home of sweet repose,
Where storms assail no more;
The stream of endless pleasure flows
On that celestial shore.
There smiling peace with love appears,
And bliss without alloy,
And they who here have sown in tears
Now reap eternal joy.

HEAVEN, then, is no illusion, no dream of fancy, but a blessed reality; so blessed that no pen but that of heavenly inspiration can give an adequate idea of it. The highest flights of poetic fancy cannot too vividly portray the eternal happiness of the redeemed, and the only danger is that it will be represented as filled with earthly delights, and that its pure and holy nature will be *vailed* by the creations of the imagination. No one

feature of the heavenly state is more striking than its spotless purity, its perfect holiness: and it is this which pre-eminently distinguishes the heaven of the Christian from every other place: it is this which renders the path to it so full of self-denial and trial, as well as of peace and happiness; and it is this which renders its final possession an event of such unutterable blessedness.

Faint at best as are our conceptions of heaven's delights, they are strong enough to sustain us in the deep waters of affliction, and indeed under every earthly trial. True, our anchor is "within the vail;" but we know that it is *there*, and that however tempest-tossed here, we shall outride every storm and, in safety, reach the haven of rest.

How do the visions of celestial bliss sustain the soul in its last great conflict!

Time at furthest is but a moment compared with eternity. A moment, then, and the weary, tortured body is laid aside; the uncaged spirit has escaped from its confinement, and soars to its home in the skies, to make one of "the spirits of the just made perfect,"—of the "great multitude whom no man can number,"—and to be for ever with its God and its Saviour. Think with joy, O my soul, of that coming triumph; think of every doubt removed—of faith changed to sight—of being in that world where all "is love, all joy in giving joy,"—whence all harsh words and ill feelings are for ever excluded—where there are no sectarian divisions, no party jealousies, but all are "one in Christ Jesus." Think of faith changed to sight—of hope swallowed up in fruition. Think of basking for ever in the unclouded sunshine of

God's love—of "seeing God as he is,"—and oh! wonderful, incomprehensible privilege!—of being made *like him*. Think of looking upon and dwelling for ever with thy crucified, risen, glorified Saviour—of seeing all the way in which thou hast been led—through joy and suffering, from grace to glory. Think,—if indeed thou canst conceive of it,—of thyself, poor, erring, irritable, complaining, discontented, unstable, sinful heart, as made perfect, "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." Dost thou not long for the hour of thy release, except as thy Master may have work for thee to do on earth? Canst thou not tranquilly and cheerfully look forward to even a stormy passage over Jordan's dark waters, with such a home in prospect, and thine *for ever?*

But there may be some who shall read

this little volume, to whom this picture of heaven is now but as an idle dream, and who hear its glories described as they would listen to a pleasant song. "And shall it be said of any among ourselves, that they heard of heaven, but made no effort to secure it? Is there one who can be indifferent to the announcement of its glories—who can feel utterly careless whether he ever prove for himself that there has been no deceit, no exaggeration, but that it is indeed a surpassingly fair land, which is to be everlastingly the home of those who believe in the Redeemer? EVERLASTINGLY THE HOME! 'God will establish it for ever.' The walls of that city shall never decay; the lustres of that city shall never grow dim; the melodies of that city shall never be hushed. And is it of such a city as this that any one of us

can be indifferent whether or no he be finally an inhabitant? We will not believe it. The old and the young, the rich and the poor, all must be ready to bind themselves by a solemn vow, that they will 'seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.'

"It is not the voice of a solitary and weak fellow-man which tells you of heaven. God is summoning you. Angels are summoning you. The myriads who have gone before are summoning you. We are surrounded by a 'great cloud of witnesses.' The battlements of the sky seem thronged with those who have fought the good fight of faith. They bend down from their eminence, and bid us ascend, through the one Mediator, to the same lofty dwelling. They shall not call in vain. We know their voices, as they pass by us solemnly and sweetly. Oh! who will

not adopt some such reflection and prayer as this: 'I have heard of heaven. I have been told of its splendours and happiness. Grant, gracious and eternal Father! that I fail not at last to be associated with those who shall rejoicingly exclaim, 'As we have heard, so have we seen, in the city of the Lord of hosts.'"

There is a happy land,
Far, far away;
Where saints in glory stand,
Bright, bright as day.
Hark! how they sweetly sing,
Worthy is our Saviour King:
Loud let his praises ring—
Praise, praise for aye.

Come to this happy land,
Come, come away!
Why will ye doubting stand?
Why thus delay?
On then, to glory on!
Be a crown and kingdom won,
Then bright above the sun
We 'll reign for aye.

Bright in that happy land
Beams every eye;
Fed by the Father's hand,
Love cannot die;
Oh! we shall happy be,
When, from sin and sorrow free,
Lord, we shall reign with thee,
Blest, blest for aye.

The reader of this little volume will excuse the following extract from a "Hymn to the Trinity," by Hildebert, since, although written in a dead language, it gives a peculiarly beautiful description of heaven, to which a translation can do no justice:—

"Me receptet Sion illa,
Sion David, urbs tranquilla,
Cujus faber, auctor lucis,
Cujus porta, lignum crucis.
Cujus muri, lapis vivus,
Cujus custos, Rex festivus.
In hâc urbe, lux solennis,
Ver æternum, pax perennis.

In hâc, odor implens cœlos,
In hâc, semper festum melos.
Non est ibi corruptela,
Non defectus, non querela.
Non minuti, non deformes,
Omnes Christo sunt conformes.
Urbs celestis, urbs beata,
Super petram collocata.
Urbs in portu satis tuto,
De longinquo te saluto.
Te saluto, te suspiro,
Te affecto, te requiro.
Quantum tui gratulantur,
Quam festivi convivantur,
Quis affectus eos stringat,
Aut quæ gemma muros pingat,
Quis chalcedon, quis jacynthus,
Noscent illi, qui sunt intus.
In plateis hujus urbis,
Sociatus piis turbis,
Cum et Moyse et Elia,
Piam cantam Alleluia!"